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“The RCMP Report on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women will go to every embassy in Ottawa” – Grand Chief Terrance Nelson

For Immediate Release May 21, 2014 (Winnipeg) – The Southern Chiefs’ Organization has reviewed the RCMP Report released last Friday. The RCMP Report and other important concerns of the 32 First Nations of the SCO will be brought to the attention of the international community.

Grand Chief Terrance Nelson attended the RCMP press conference on May 16, 2014 and noted, “the RCMP point out that close to 90% of murder cases are solved and that this is not different from the solve rate of non-Aboriginal women victims. The press conference was a media spin to say that Indigenous women are not treated any differently than non natives. This is not what the Robert Pickton Inquiry and the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry revealed. This is not what the over-representation of Indigenous women among Canada’s murdered and missing women reveals.”

Nelson added, “the women are real; not statistics to serve the RCMPs Public Relations strategy.” The RCMP Report confirms that 1,181 Aboriginal women have been murdered or have gone missing in Canada over a 33 year period. “The RCMP has no solutions on prevention. Canada has condemned other nations like Iran and Nigeria for their treatment of women, but this report shows Canada has its own crimes against women. Massive unemployment exists amongst First Nations, including 60 to 95% unemployment in the 32 SCO First Nations. More deaths will occur as extreme poverty ensures that First Nations don’t have the resources to address those concerns.”

Ron Wilson, Community Justice Development Coordinator for the SCO, asserted that from a prevention / intervention perspective RCMP and municipal police policies and procedures related to the reporting of a missing indigenous women or child need to be amended; “such calls received must be classified as a priority call with immediate physical police response and with a mindset as that of a criminal investigation.” Wilson also suggested that “this policy change would speak volumes to the ‘Next Steps’ section of the RCMP report and the plan to ‘enhance efforts on unresolved cases’. The first 48 hours really is critical to solvability of Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women.”

In November 2013, the Province of British Columbia released a report revealing that only 3 of the 63 recommendations made in 2012 by the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry related to the Robert Pickton murders have been fully implemented. Pickton killed 49 women, many of them aboriginal women while police ignored evidence that could have prevented many of the murders.

In Canada, recommendations made as a result of public inquiries are not legally binding on governments. Nelson concluded, “Regardless of whether or not a public inquiry is held, we want Canada to know that we hold them to account for the actions or inactions, of the past and today, and we will make the evidence known to other Nations across the world.”

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